

**DEMAREST BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**COW and REGULAR SESSION MEETING MINUTES**  
**County Road School – Media Center**  
**December 12, 2023**  
**7:00 P.M.**

I. OPEN PUBLIC MEETING

A. It was moved by Verna, seconded by Cantatore to open the Regular Meeting to the public at 7:00 P.M.

B. President Holzberg read the following announcement:

The New Jersey Open Public Meetings Law was enacted to ensure the right of the public to have advance notice of and to attend the meetings of public bodies at which any business affecting their interests is discussed or acted upon.

In accordance with the provisions of this Act, the Demarest Board of Education has caused notice of this meeting to be published by having the date, time and place thereof posted at the Borough Hall and at the Middle School and by notifying in writing two newspapers: The Record and The Suburbanite.

II. FLAG SALUTE

A. President Holzberg led the flag salute.

III. ROLL CALL

Present: Brillhart, Cantatore, Choi, Lee, Verna, Holzberg

Absent: Governale

Also present: Ms. Kelly Business Administrator/ Board Secretary

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS

A. It was moved by Cantatore, seconded by Choi and approved by unanimous voice vote of those present to approve:

- November 14, 2023 Executive Session Meeting Minutes
- November 14, 2023 COW and Regular Session Meeting Minutes

V. CORRESPONDENCE

- Thank you letter from the Vikings soccer team.

VI. BOARD PRESIDENT'S REPORT

A. Board President Holzberg wished everyone and their families a happy holiday season. President Holzberg thanked Sheila Verna for her years of service and for all she has done for the students of our school and wished her the best.

VII. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Ms. Kelly reported the following on Mr. Fox's behalf:

- I am sorry I am not there to share in this tribute to a long-serving member of the Board of Education. I want to personally thank you, Sheila, for all of your support during the decade you served as a Board of Education member here in Demarest. You gave attention to detail in every aspect and I believe you served on all of our committees in your tenure. You had a great passion for success at all levels, and in the time you served the district accomplished so much. Expansions and renovations at all three buildings and the building of programs were nothing short of outstanding and all within budget. Most of all, you cared about student success academically and emotionally. You are to be commended for your many years of service to the children of the Demarest School District. Wishing you great success in your future endeavors.
- Mr. Fox wishes everyone a happy holiday season.

#### VIII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

The finance committee reported on the financing of the middle school gymnasium addition project.

#### IX. OTHER REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS

##### A. Principal Regan reviewed the following:

- Principal Regan thanked Sheila Verna for her service and noted what a pleasure it was to work with her.
- Windows installed in the 7th-grade wing.
- Student council food drive.
- Basketball season started last week. The boy's team has a new coach.
- Brain Busters had a competition this week.
- The winter concert is this Thursday.
- School musical auditions are tomorrow. This year's musical is Shrek Jr.
- Heat transfer lab in Ms. Werner's class.
- Ukulele class.
- Coming up: musical auditions, Heroes and Cool Kids, PTO staff luncheon, talent show.

##### B. Principal Mazzini reviewed the following:

- Principal Mazzini thanked Sheila Verna for her service and her support of the students and staff.
- 2nd-grade mystery readers.
- 2nd-grade Diwali celebrations.
- 4th-grade career day.
- Spanish class skits.
- Character awards.
- CRS playground addition.
- Coming up: CRS and preschool winter concerts.

#### X. REVIEW OF AGENDA

A. Board members reviewed the items.

#### XI. PUBLIC COMMENT (AGENDA ITEMS ONLY)

- A. It was moved by Verna, seconded by Cantatore and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to open the meeting to public comment.
- B. The following attendees spoke:

- Councilman David Jiang, told the board that the town will be reevaluating property values at the end of 2024 with results expected in 2025. He also asked about the process of appointing a new board member. Ms. Kelly replied that the district is required to send out a public notice to the community that there is a vacancy on the board of education and that all interested parties are to submit an application to the board. Once the board receives the applications the board will interview each candidate and then select a candidate to fill the position by board vote. The selected candidate will hold the position until January 1, 2025. If they would like to continue on the board they must petition to be on the ballot for the next school board election and be elected by a majority vote from the community.
- Ms. Hussain of 28 Wellwood Road reported that she would like to see the Eid holiday added as a day off for the students and staff when creating the school calendar for the 2024/2025 school year.
- It was moved Choi, seconded by Lee and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to close the meeting to public comment.

**XII. ACTIONS**

**A. Instruction – Staffing**

1. It was moved by Brillhart, seconded by Choi and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve the provisional employment of Lily Glastein as a substitute teacher for the remainder of the 2023/2024 school year, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator. Employment status would become effective upon candidate's compliance with P.L. 1986, c.116 (revised 6/30/98) and N.J.S.A. 19A:6-7.7.
2. It was moved by Brillhart, seconded by Choi and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to accept the resignation of Claudia DeRocco, leave replacement for Luther Lee Emerson School Staff ID#1000, effective November 16, 2023, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator.
3. It was moved by Brillhart, seconded by Choi and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve the provisional employment of Gabrielle DeLora, MA, Step 1, leave replacement for Luther Lee Emerson School Staff ID#1000, from December 18, 2023 through April 30, 2024, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator. Employment status would become effective upon candidate's compliance with P.L. 1986, c.116 (revised 6/30/98) and N.J.S.A. 19A:6-7.7.

**B. Instruction – Pupils/Programs**

1. It was moved by Cantatore, seconded by Lee and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve the following field trips, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator:

<b>Location</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Grade/Group</b>
Fairview Lake Newton, NJ	5/1/24-5/3/24	6th grade
University Heights Newark	1/10/24	Science and Engineering Team

Meadowlands Environmental Center Lyndhurst	2/15/24	5th grade
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**C. Support Services – Staffing**

1. It was moved by Lee, seconded by Cantatore and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to accept the resignation of Elisandra Lumaj, paraprofessional at County Road School, effective December 15, 2023, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator.
2. It was moved by Lee, seconded by Cantatore and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve the provisional employment of the following paraprofessional not to exceed 29 hours weekly, according to the paraprofessional hourly guide, for the remainder of the 2023/2024 school year, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator.  
Employment status would become effective upon the candidate’s compliance with P.L. 1986, c. 116 (revised 6/30/98) and N.J.S.A. 18A:6-7.7:

School/Position	Staff	Step
CRS - Paraprofessional PK (classroom aide)	Sadete Istrefi	2

**D. Support Services – Board of Education**

1. It was moved by Verna, seconded by Cantatore and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve the following request for facilities use on the following dates, in accordance with policy 7510, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator:

Event	Date(s) and time	Location
PTO Principal's Challenge	Tuesdays 3/26/24-5/16/24 when school is open 3:05 PM-3:45 PM	CRS field and APR
PTO Principal's Challenge	Tuesdays 3/26/24-5/16/24 when school is open 7:30 AM-8:10 AM	LLE field and gymnasium
PTO Principal's Challenge	Wednesdays 3/27/24-5/15/24 (5/15 outside only) when school is open 3:05 PM-4:00 PM	DMS field and gymnasium
PTO 5K bag pick up	5/14/24-5/17/24 3:30 PM-9:00 PM	CRS cafeteria and blacktop
PTO 5K event	Sunday 5/19/24 5:00 AM-1:00 PM	CRS field, blacktop and gymnasium
PTO Lunar New Year practice	1/29/24, 1/30/24, 1/31/24, 2/1/24, 2/5/24, 2/6/24, 2/7/24, 2/8/24 4:20 PM - 5:00 PM 2/2/24	CRS gymnasium

	4:30 PM - 6:30 PM	
PTO Lunar New Year practice	1/12/24, 1/19/24, 1/26/24, 2/2/24 4:20 PM -5:15 PM	LLE gymnasium
Vikings	Monday - Friday 3/25/24-6/21/24 4:00 PM - 8:00 PM	LLE field
Vikings	Monday, Wednesday, Friday 3/25/24-6/21/24 4:00 PM - 8:00 PM	DMS field

2. It was moved by Verna, seconded by Cantatore and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve the attendance of the following workshops with all hotel, meals and travel reimbursed at the statutory rates per NJ OMB guidelines, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator:

Name/Title	Event	Registration Fee
Kelly Stevens Supervisor of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment	Techspo/ NJASA Atlantic City NJ 1/24/24-1/26/24	\$540.00
Anna Kuzdraj Director of Special Education	Special Education Litigation/NJPSA FEA 2/14/24, 3/12/24, 5/3/24	\$435.00

3. It was moved by Verna, seconded by Cantatore and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to accept a PTO grant in the amount of \$6,000.00 for special projects at County Road School and Luther Lee Emerson School, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator.
4. It was moved by Verna, seconded by Cantatore and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve In-Line Air Conditioning Co., Inc. for HVAC repairs under ESCNJ # MRESC 19/20-13 Bid Term of 3/18/2020 - 3/17/2022 & ESCNJ # MRESC 19/20-13 EXTENSION Bid Term of 3/18/2023 - 3/17/2024, for the 2023/2024 school year, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator.
5. It was moved by Verna, seconded by Cantatore and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve the acceptance of the following school bus emergency evacuation drill in compliance with NJAC 6A:27-11.2, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator:
- A drill for transported students was conducted on December 5, 2023, at the Demarest Middle School on Northwood Avenue, supervised by Principal Regan.
6. It was moved by Verna, seconded by Cantatore and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve the Safe Reopening Plan and submission to the New Jersey Department of Education for the January 1, 2024 - June 30, 2024 period, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator.

Ms. Kelly noted that there are no changes. It must be approved every 6 months and posted on the website.

7. It was moved by Verna, seconded by Cantatore and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve the following job descriptions, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator:

Gifted and Talented teacher
STEM teacher
Preschool Teacher

8. It was moved by Verna, seconded by Cantatore and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to accept the resignation of Sheila Verna, Vice-President of the Demarest Board of Education, effective December 31, 2023, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator.

9. It was moved by Verna, seconded by Cantatore and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to adopt the following resolution:

WHEREAS, Mrs. Sheila Verna dedicated her time and services to the children of Demarest and the Demarest Board of Education, and  
 WHEREAS, her dedication served as a model of service to the community,  
 NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Demarest Board of Education does hereby extend its appreciation and gratitude to Mrs. Sheila Verna in recognition of her eleven (11) years of dedicated service as a member of the Demarest Board of Education.

E. Support Services—Fiscal Management

1. It was moved by Cantatore, seconded by Lee and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to confirm the November payrolls as follows, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator:

November 15, 2023    \$513,729.48  
 November 30, 2023    \$496,937.03

2. It was moved by Cantatore, seconded by Lee and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve December 12, 2023 bill list as follows, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator:

<u>Subtotal Per Fund</u>	<u>Amount</u>
11 General Current Expense	\$ 432,270.39
20 Special Revenue Fund	\$ 45,510.68
21 Student Activity Fund	\$ 4,831.00
22 Athletic Fund	\$ 330.00
30 Capital Projects Fund	\$ 21,000.80
60 Cafeteria Fund	<u>\$ 19,811.79</u>
Total Bills:	\$523,754.66

3. It was moved by Cantatore, seconded by Lee and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve the following resolution, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator:

Receipt of Certification from Board Secretary

Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6:20-2.13 (d), I, Antoinette Kelly, certify that as of November 30, 2023, no budgetary line item account has obligations or payments (contractual orders) that, in total, exceed the amount appropriated by the district Board of Education pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:22-8 and 18A:22-8.1.

4. It was moved by Cantatore, seconded by Lee and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve the following resolution, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator:

Certification of Board of Education

Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6:20-2.13 (e), we certify that as of November 30, 2023 after review of the secretary's monthly financial report (appropriations section) and upon consultation with the appropriate district official, to the best of our knowledge, no major account or fund has been over-extended in violation of NJAC 6:20-2.13 (b) and that sufficient funds are available to meet the district's financial obligations for the remainder of the fiscal year.

5. It was moved by Cantatore, seconded by Lee and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to acknowledge receipt of the November 2023 Report of the Board Secretary, A148 and the Report of the Treasurer, A-149, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator.

6. It was moved by Cantatore, seconded by Lee and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to confirm the following budget transfer for November 2023, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator:

**To:**

<u>Account Number</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Amount</u>
11-190-100-106	Regular Programs-Other Salaries for Instruction	13,000.00
11-000-211-300	Attendance & Social Work Services-Professional Services	5,000.00
11-000-217-106	Extraordinary Services-Salaries Aides	15,000.00

**From:**

<u>Account Number</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Amount</u>
11-213-100-106	Resource Room-Other Salaries for Instruction	13,000.00
11-000-213-104	Health Services-Substitute Nurses	5,000.00
11-000-217-320	Extraordinary Services-Purchased Prof Services	15,000.00

7. It was moved by Cantatore, seconded by Lee and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to accept the ROD (Regular Operating District) grant for univents at Luther Lee Emerson School, at an amount not to exceed \$221,375.00, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator.

8. It was moved by Cantatore, seconded by Lee and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to accept the ROD (Regular Operating District) grant for univents and boiler pumps at Demarest Middle School, at an amount not to exceed \$1,651,280.00, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator.

XIII. PUBLIC COMMENT

- A. It was moved by Verna, seconded by Choi and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to open the meeting to public comment.
- B. There was no comment from the public.
- C. It was moved by Choi, seconded by Lee and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to close the meeting to public comment.

XIV. NEW BUSINESS

None at this time.

XV. EXECUTIVE SESSION

- A. There was no motion to enter the executive session.

XVI. ADJOURNMENT

- A. It was moved by Verna, seconded by Cantatore and approved by unanimous voice vote to adjourn the meeting at 7:50 P.M.

Sincerely,



Antoinette Kelly  
Business Administrator and Board Secretary